Engaging People, Linking the World –
Broadband Planning Activities Update Report

The Nebraska Information Technology Commission Community Council (NITC), University of Nebraska - Lincoln (UNL), Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) and the AIM Institute are cooperatively leading the effort to address the broadband planning needs of Nebraska's communities. The update is focused around the three project areas – Capacity Building, Technical Assistance and Regional Planning.

Capacity Building -
This project will benchmark technology use across relevant community sectors; set goals for improved technology use within each sector; and develop a plan for achieving its goals, with specific recommendations for web-based application development and demand creation. Projects include:

- ***Internet Connectivity and Use in Nebraska: Household Survey*** *UNL.* Nebraskans were surveyed about their computer and Internet usage, challenges and desires for the future. *Status*: 6600 Nebraskans surveyed in February 2010 – 47% response rate. Survey results are available at broadband.nebraska.gov. Follow-up survey will be conducted in 2014 that will over sample unserved or underserved populations that were identified in initial survey.
- ***Business Survey*** *DED.* Businesses will be surveyed through the Business Retention and Expansion process to identify the strengths and challenges they face in utilizing technology. *Status:* Businesses continue to be surveyed using DED's BR&E program. Data has been gathered from over 400 key businesses. Sixteen communities currently hold a licenses to input data in eSynchronist; two additional communities received grants to begin using eSynchronist in Quarter 4 2011. Plan to implement new survey of businesses in Q2 2012.
- ***Inventory of Broadband and Digital Literacy Programs*** *UNL.* In order to identify potential partners and to avoid duplication of efforts, an inventory of broadband and digital literacy programs will be conducted. *Status:* Initial scan of current efforts to inventory broadband and digital literacy has occurred.
- ***Focused Surveys*** *UNL*. Focused surveys will be conducted in underserved areas including reservations, North and South Omaha, North Central Nebraska. In addition, limited monies are available to provide analysis of data for communities that wish to look further at their community. *Status:* Focused surveys will be conducted after regional groups complete initial assessments using the planning workbook.
- ***Government and Economic Developer Survey*** *UNL*. Surveys will gather information on access, adoption, usage and technical assistance needs of all county and community governments, chambers of commerce and economic developers, and explore technology usage. *Status:* Questionnaire drafted and reviewed. Initial contact was made with the Nebraska Economic Development Association to review and survey membership. Survey will be conducted during Quarter 2.
- ***Creating Broadband Plan/Administrative*** *UNL.* Regional technology plans as well as a statewide report and recommendations will be created through project. *Status:* To achieve the objectives of the grant, the broadband planning oversight team continues to meet on a bi-monthly basis. Broadband mapping and planning displays were present at events in Q1 and

will be present in Q2 2012 at the Governor's Rural Development Conference, InfoTech and Rural Futures.

Technical Assistance -

The Nebraska Broadband Technical Assistance Program will provide technical assistance on supporting entrepreneurs through technology, and other topics to local governments, chambers of commerce, and economic developers especially in areas with lower than average broadband subscribership. Projects include:

- ***Statewide Conference*** *AIM Institute***.** Conduct Statewide Conference focused on broadband adoption and utilization. *Status*. October 2, Cornhusker Conference Center location of 2012 Broadband Conference. Keynote address by Vint Cerf, Google Vice President. Save-the-date marketing materials developed, being widely distributed via e-mail lists and directly at various events across the state. Planning underway for remainder of the conference agenda.

- ***Regional Workshops*** *UNL***.** Regional Workshops will be held to address specific issues related to an area on broadband adoption and utilization. *Status:* Two regional workshops will be held during Quarter 2 2012.
  - ➢ May 15, 2012 - Accelerating Collaboration Summit at Gering Civic Center. Western region co-sponsoring workshop that will be facilitated by Ed Morrison, Purdue University, to identify community goals –and how to achieve them.
  - ➢ June 14, 2012 – Northeast Regional Broadband Conference in Norfolk, Nebraska. Presentations will be made about infrastructure, the cloud, mapping, Internet safety, as well as broadband applications for agriculture, government, and business.

- ***Webinars*** *UNL***.** Up to four webinars will be held each year of the grant to address broadband adoption and utilization. *Status:* Webinars averaged 40 participants at each session. First quarter webinar presentations featured NebraskaLink, the Nebraska Health Information Initiative and Tablet Integration in a Small Business Environment. BroadMap will be featured at the May 16 webinar. Webinars are archived at broadband.nebraska.gov.

- ***Best Practice Videos*** *UNL/AIM Institute***.**   At least 20 examples of best practices in expanding broadband adoption across Nebraska will be highlighted. *Status:* Initial candidates identified, contacted and confirmed. Production begins during Quarter 2. The best practice sessions at the statewide conference are now available at broadband.nebraska.gov.

- ***Entrepreneur Acceleration System (EAS)*** *DED***.** An entrepreneurial mentoring program will focus on the human capital of the founders and their core teams that includes addressing how broadband can help strengthen entrepreneurs in the state. *Status*: The 2011 cohort concluded during Quarter 4 2011 with the 2011 Impact Summit. Forty-six guides/mentors were selected for the 2012 EAS program which started in 1Q 2012. These guides selected 160 companies and 746 managers to work with through the program, impacting almost 5,000 employees in Nebraska. Participating companies attend the four core workshops led by Gallup in Quarter 1 through 3 of 2012. Companies are also provided one on one support from a Gallup trained guide and participate in self-paced activities administered online throughout program. Analysis of the nearly 200 broadband surveys (90 business owners) was completed in Q1 2012 and will be reported in Q2 2012.

- ***Technical Assistance Expertise*** *UNL/Steering Team*. The focus of this effort will be to provide technical assistance in the area of business and entrepreneurism to chambers of

commerce, economic developers, and local and county stakeholders statewide and regionally to increase broadband adoption. *Status:* Technical assistance expertise will be conducted as needs are identified.

- **Broadband Portal Development** UNL. Develop a central broadband portal which will serve as a source of information on broadband efforts in Nebraska. *Status*: Official website will be launched during Q2 2012.

Local and Regional Planning

The Nebraska Broadband Local/Regional Technology Planning Teams program will augment regional planning approaches identified in the initial grant application with community planning, business and entrepreneurial discussions, government discussions, and agricultural discussions. Activities include:

- **Regional Planning Teams** UNL. Regional planning teams will be formed to create the regional plans. *Status:* During Q1 2012, regional coaches met to renew deadlines in completing regional plans. A framework has been created for coaches to enter progress on the planning. A goal has been established to introduce the regional goals at the Statewide Conference in October.
    - The *Engaging People. Linking the World: Broadband Planning Workbook* assessments available on-line are being used by planning teams to gather input. Over 365 individual have completed the quiz on education. Nearly 80% of those responding indicated a need for a more thorough assessment of broadband usage in education. A similar response was indicated by nearly 50 individuals answering the agriculture quiz. Assessments can be accessed at http://go.unl.edu/xf6.
    - The northeast Nebraska broadband planning developed a youth broadband assessment which has been sent to 68 schools.
    - Regions continue to be at various levels of the planning process. All regions are meeting.

- **Community Planning – North and South Omaha** UNL/AIM Institute in North and South Omaha. North and South Omaha were identified as underserved regions/areas through the survey of Nebraska households. *Status:* Identified a preliminary list of community partners to engage in developing and implementing adoption and utilization. Initial conversations have occurred and representatives from North and South Omaha were invited to the broadband conference. Contact made with primary broadband providers in Omaha requesting meetings to obtain updates on provider initiatives. Contact made with several potential partners inviting them to participate.

- **Community Planning - Cultural and Unserved Communities** UNL. Additional community or local planning teams in regions/areas identified as underserved through the survey of Nebraska households and broadband mapping data.
    - The cultural coach and steering team members met with members of the Winnebago Tribe, Santee and Omaha to begin collaboration on the project. Through meetings, the cultural coach has found, "The overall concern is with access and affordability for individual families and homes, even though some technology may be 'available.' Many homes do not have computers, and individuals rely mostly on cellphones/smart phones for communication and/or internet access. Some are interested in other forms of

communication such as a local community radio station."
- Cultural coach has continued to meet with the tribal organizations.
- Developing a framework to work with Spanish speaking populations. Will coordinate with the library commission.

- ***Focus Groups*** *UNL*. Seven to 10 focus groups will be held with anchor institutions and utility providers as well as populations with low usage rates. *Status:* Regional groups have requested that focus groups not be held until initial assessments are conducted. Anticipate beginning focus groups in the summer 2012. Initial assessment results indicate that there is an interest to further explore technology needs in areas of education and agriculture. Focus groups will be held during the Fall NEDA conference.

- ***Community Sector Discussions*** *UNL*. Community sector discussions will be held to further advance adoption of technology in specific industries such as business and entrepreneurs, chambers of commerce, agriculture and the health industry. The focus of each discussion will be to benchmark technology use across the specific sectors, set goals for improved technology, and develop a plan to achieve goals. *Status:* The community sector discussions will begin in 2012 and conducted by UNL.

Project Partner Steering Team:
AIM Institute, Rod Armstrong
State of Nebraska
     Nebraska Department of Economic Development – Allison Hatch and Tim O'Brien
     Nebraska Information Technology Commission – Anne Byers
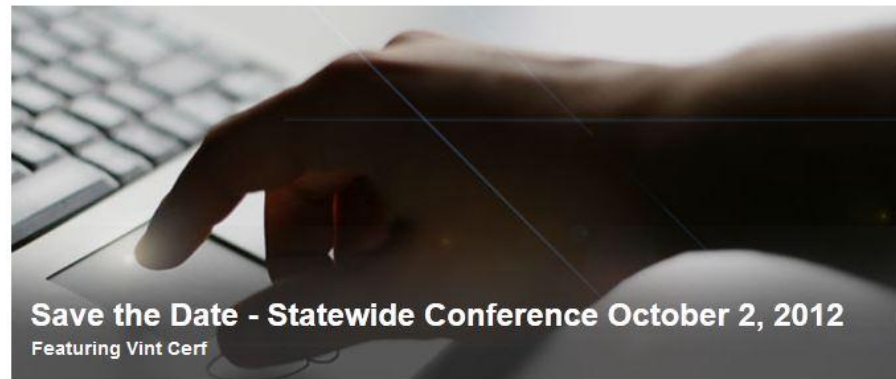University of Nebraska Lincoln
     Center for Applied Rural Innovation (CARI) – Charlotte Narjes and Becky Vogt
     Extension – Connie Hancock
     Communications Specialist **–** Jan Cejka, UNL CARI

For more information, contact Charlotte Narjes at cnarjes@unl.edu or Connie Hancock at chancock1@unl.edu.

NEBRASKA BROADBAND

Email Sign Up

| Home | Get Involved | Broadband Literacy | News | Events | Contact Us | Resources |

Save the Date - Statewide Conference October 2, 2012
Featuring Vint Cerf

Catch Up on Events

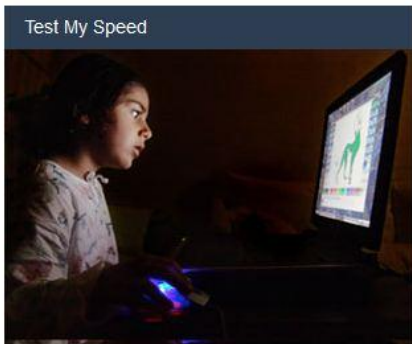**Stimulus Information**

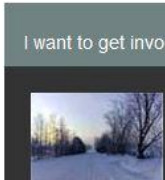**Nebraska Regional Efforts**

Sign me up for updates

Broadband Goals

conNEcting
Engaging people. Linking the World.

The Nebraska Broadband Project is part of a national initiative, The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

These Recovery Act investments will help bridge the digital divide, improve access to education and healthcare services, and boost economic development for communities held back by limited or no access to broadband.. **Read more about the mission and goals**.

Test My Speed

I want to get involved...

Regional Steering Teams are currently meeting to engage in the conversation around adoption and utilization. Learn how to be more involved in your region!

Broadband Maps

Find out who is providing Internet Service in your area. National and Nebraska maps will help you determine your available connectivity.

Take the Survey

Your opinion counts! Take five minutes and complete the survey of interest. Share your concerns about technology involving health care, education and agriculture.

Broadband Planning Update to Nebraska Public Service Commission, 4-10-2012